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Statement submitted by Nurses across Borders, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

When, in 2000, the entire world committed itself to achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals, it also expected to celebrate its successes in 15 years. In less than one year from now, that magic year is supposed to signal the successes of the achievements of the eight Goals. But your guess is as good as mine as to whether we have much to celebrate in terms of successes. The basic reason is that the majority of the world population is still living in a state of denial as to the impact of climate change on human and sustainable development and refuses to draw any link between human health and climate change. The basic indicator for measuring the success of any climate change campaign is human health.

In 2010, Nurses across Borders — while initiating for the first time ever in Nigeria the involvement of health-care practitioners in the campaign against climate change — recognized the impossibility of achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a result of the effects of climate change disasters. Climate change affects the fundamental requirements for health: clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. Globally, the number of reported weather-related natural disasters has more than tripled since the 1960s. Every year, these disasters result in over 60,000 deaths, mainly in developing countries. Rising temperatures and variable levels of precipitation are likely to decrease the production of staple foods in many of the poorest regions, and by as much as 50 per cent by 2020 in some African countries. This will increase the prevalence of malnutrition and undernutrition, which currently cause 3.5 million deaths every year. Summing up these effects, here is how climate change affects each Millennium Development Goal:

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger: impossible owing to drought and famine
- Achievement of universal primary education: impossible as a result of flooding, increased rainfall and the occurrence of epidemics owing to climatic conditions
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women: impossible, as women are the worst-affected victims of climate change effects
- Reduction in child mortality: a pipe dream, as children are more prone to health hazards owing to climate change
- Improvement of maternal health: impossible given the unequipped manpower in health-care facilities and poor living conditions owing to climate change etc.
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: malaria spreads more during increased rainfall, especially in Africa; mission impossible
- Ensuring environmental sustainability: far worse, as erosions are on the increase, floods are wiping out whole towns, there is deforestation etc.
- Developing a global partnership for development: this may be very difficult, as the countries that are worst hit will be at a disadvantage in negotiations

Nurses across Borders has been engaged with its partner, the Seatrust Institute (United States of America), and has collaborated with the World Health

Organization in raising the voice for health within the agenda of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and promoting the view that today health has become crucial for measuring the successes recorded in the climate change campaign and the Millennium Development Goals. A post-2015 development agenda with a more effective response is apt.